

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SANTIA 06127 271731Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 6127

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CI, MILI, SHUM, PDIP
SUBJECT: GOC INVITATION TO GENERAL MCAULIFFE

REF: SANTIAGO 3944

1. SUMMARY: LAST MAY WHEN USCINCSO GENERAL MCAULIFFE TENTATIVELY ACCEPTED GOC INVITATION TO ATTEND INDEPENDENCE AND ARMY DAY CELEBRATIONS SEPTEMBER 18-19, IT WAS AGREED THAT FINAL DECISION WOULD DEPEND UPON CHILEAN SITUATION IN MID-AUGUST. GOC NOW HAS REITERATED INVITATION. WHILE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION HAS IMPROVED DURING 1977, WE ARE AWAITING SIGNIFICANT STEPS WHICH PROBABLY WILL NOT APPEAR UNTIL SEPTEMBER 11 COUP ANNIVERSARY AND WHICH WE WILL WANT TO ASSESS. FOR REASONS DETAILED BELOW, EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT USCINCSO WORKING VISIT IN OCTOBER-NOVEMBER WOULD GIVE MORE APPROPRIATE AND PRECISE SIGNAL TO GOC THAN ATTENDANCE AT SEPTEMBER CEREMONIES. WE RECOMMEND THAT USCINCSO BEG OFF CURRENT INVITATION BUT INDICATE POSSIBILITY OF VISIT LATER IN YEAR. END SUMMARY.

2. BACKGROUND: GOC INVITED USCINCSO MCAULIFFE TO COME TO CHILE FOR INDEPENDENCE AND ARMY DAY CELEBRATIONS SEPTEMBER 18-19. AFTER CLEARING IN WASHINGTON WITH EMBASSY, GENERAL MCAULIFFE
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 SANTIA 06127 271731Z

GAVE TENTATIVE ACCEPTANCE. AT THAT TIME ALL AGREED FINAL DECISION WOULD BE MADE ON BASIS CHILEAN POLITICAL SITUATION MID-AUGUST. GOC HAS RECENTLY REITERATED INVITATION TO MCAULIFFE AND EXTENDED DATES TO SEPTEMBER 16 TO 21, WITH PROBABLE INTENT TO BUILD-UP IMPORTANCE OF HIS VISIT.

3. THE EMBASSY RECOMMENDS AGAINST GENERAL MCAULIFFE ACCEPTING THE

SEPTEMBER INVITATION FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

-- WHILE THERE HAS BEEN SOME FOWARD PROGRESS IN HUMAN RIGHTS IN RECENT MONTHS, SIGNIFICANT STEPS ARE PENDING. WE DO NOT EXPECT THEM TO BE COMPLETED PRIOR SEPTEMBER 11 OR PERHAPS SEPTEMBER 18. THUS, A MCAULIFFE VISIT IN THE MID-SEPTEMBER TIME FRAME PRESENTS US WITH A NO-WIN SITUATION. IF THE GOC HAS NOT TAKEN THE STEPS WE ANTICIPATE OF CURBING THE NOTORIOUS SECRET POLICE (DINA) AND REDUCING THE STATE OF SIEGE, THEN A MCAULIFFE VISIT WOULD DEFINITELY NOT RPT NOT BE APPROPRIATE. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF THE GOC ANNOUNCES PROGRESSIVE STEPS JUST PRIOR TO THE MCAULIFFE VISIT, THEN USCINCSO'S PRESENCE LOOKS LIKE INSTANT PAYOFF. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT WOULD DEFINITELY BE PREFERABLE TO POSTPONE THE VISIT.

-- THERE IS SOME DANGER OF OVERLOADING CIRCUITS WITH OFFICIAL VISITORS. ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN WILL BE IN TOWN AUGUST 11-13 AND CODEL YATRON THE FOLLOWING WEEK. BY LATE SEPTEMBER WE MAY HAVE A NEW AMBASSADOR ON BOARD.

-- IN OUR VIEW, ATTENDANCE BY GENERAL MCAULIFFE AT INDEPENDENCE AND ARMY DAY CELEBRATIONS CARRIES THE IMPLICATION OF CLOSER RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR GOVERNMENTS AND MILITARIES THAN IN FACT EXIST AT THIS TIME. MCAULIFFE WOULD LOOM LARGE AMONG OTHER VISITING MILITARY GUESTS, MOST OF WHICH COME FROM NEIGHBORING SOUTH AMERICAN COUNTRIES.

4. ON OTHER HAND, WE BELIEVE A LATER WORKING VISIT BY GENERAL MCAULIFFE COULD SUPPORT US POLICY OBJECTIVES IN CHILE AND WE SO CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SANTIA 06127 271731Z

RECOMMEND IN SANTIAGO 6030.

-- MCAULIFFE VISIT (PARTICULARLY AS SEEN AGAINST HIS ABSENCE IN 1976) WILL CONSTITUTE ANOTHER STEP IN USG ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PROGRESS ON HUMAN RIGHST FRONT. THIS ASSUMES ANTICIPATED IMPROVEMENTS MATERIALIZE.

-- GOC AT TOP LEVELS HAS DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING THAT CIVILIAN AND MILITARY ELEMENTS OF THE USG SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE ON CHILE MATTERS. THE TOP LEVELS OF THE GOC PERSIST IN THE VIEW THAT POLICY DIFFERENCES WITH THE UNITED STATES CAN BE SOLVED BY MILITARY TO MILITARY CONTACT. THEY CANNOT AND MCAULIFFE COULD ERASE ANY CONFUSION ON THAT SCORE.

-- GOC FEELS THAT USG IS CURRENTLY TILTED TOWARD PERU ON SECURITY MATTERS. MCAULIFFE VISITED PERU THIS PAST APRIL. MCAULIFFE VISIT HERE, WHILE BRINGING NO CHANGE IN SUBSTANCE IN US ASSISTANCE POLICY, WOULD AT LEAST BALANCE PROTOCOL SCORE.

-- DESPITE CHANGING MILGP STATUS, CHILE REMAINS AREA OF INTEREST FOR USCINCSO AND, IN ABSENCE CONTRARY BROADER USG INTEREST, PERIODIC VISIT USEFUL FOR MILITARY REASONS (LAST VISIT WAS IN LATE SEPTEMBER 1975).

5. RECOMMENDED ACTION: THAT GENERAL MCAULIFFE INFORM GOC THAT SCHEDULING WILL NOT ALLOW HIM TO ATTEND CEREMONIES SEPTEMBER

18-19 BUT THAT HE HOPES HE WILL BE ABLE TO VISIT CHILE LATER IN
YEAR. (USDAO/USMILGP DO NOT CONCUR AND BELIEVE THAT REVERSAL
OF PREVIOUS TENTATIVE ACCEPTANCE OF CHILEAN INVITATION BY USCINCSO
WOULD BE AN UNNECESSARY EMBARRASSMENT. THEY FURTHER DISAGREE
WITH RELATING GENERAL MCAULIFFE VISIT TO SPECIFIC ANTICIPATED
HUMAN RIGHTS IMPROVEMENTS AND CONTEND THAT PROPOSED DATE IS
NORMAL FOR SUCH INVITATIONS AND A LOW PROFILE IS MORE PROBABLE
IN SEPTEMBER WITH MANY OTHER DIGNITARIES PRESENT THAN WITH
SUBSEQUENT INDIVIDUAL VISIT.)

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